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ASIA SUNDAY IN JAPAN

all to Worship

... I have
called you
friends,..."
John 15:15)

From many
places in
Asia to which
we belong,
many friendly
hands are
extended to
us. These
hands are
appeals and
cries. At
the same time
these hands
reach out
invitations
calling us to be friends.

While we are listening to crying voices
which are arising from various places in
Asia, when we sit around the table for a
meal with friends, and while we sing
songs, think together, and share joy
with all friends, we are reminded of
those things which we had almost
forgotten and we realize that we too are
Asians.

We described these activities as
"worship". Now we would like to invite
you to this worship as friends. Let us
sing together in praising our Lord as
friends in Asia.

After the Korean drums and songs from

other Asian countries, prayers for
Burma, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and
other CCA (Christian Conference of Asia)
related countries were continued.

Rev. Maejima, NCC General Secretary,
described the
biblical
story of
"Feeding the
Five
Thousand" and
distributed
bread among
the
participants.
Rev. Maejima
went on to
explain that
500,000,000
people, or
one tenth of
the world's
population
are facing
starvation.
The world's

population, divided by the world's
population, is estimated to yield an
available calorie intake of 3,000 kilo
calories (one kilogram). Why then are
so many people in the world starving
today? It is because the distribution
of food is prohibiting the availability
of food for all.

Another aspect is the increase in
military spending. The UN Food and
Agricultural Organization Survey shows
that simple mathematics prove that the
number of those starving in the world
can be cut by the end of this century,
if the expenditures for military
purposes in the entire world were
stopped for thirteen days.



Jesus has taught us that we must learn to share what we have, and there is enough food for all people if we learn to share with one another. Breaking bread together in a circle is a symbol of sharing.

ASIA SUNDAY

Asia Sunday was held in Tokyo on May 14th. Over one hundred people gathered at the Waseda Hoshien for a celebration of Asia.

A variety of foods were offered from Bangladesh, Vietnam and Thailand and many more, prepared by foreign exchange students. Handiwork was displayed and on sale, a result of the work of development projects in several countries. Resources were available for those wanting to learn more about the situation and issues in Asia; slide shows were also presented.

In the children's corner children enjoyed learning the games and songs played and sung by children in other Asian countries.

The afternoon culminated in a worship service which was planned and carried out by youth. It included songs of Asia, a cultural performance of Korean drums by Korean women residents in Japan and an Ainu women playing the "Mukuri" (musical instrument), a message (included in this edition) by special Asia week guest Noel Villalba and Rev. Maejima Munetoshi. Prayers were given for all the countries of Asia and communion was shared. The service was creative, untraditional and truly participatory.

ASIA WEEK - "Who Is My Neighbor"

Japan's special Asia Week guests were Noel Villalba, a Filipino now working for the Christian Conference of Asia's Urban Industrial Mission (CCA-URM) in Hong Kong and Rev. Park Sang Jung, from Korea, the General Secretary of CCA.

Addressing the Asia Week theme of "Who is my Neighbor" the guests travelled to many parts of Japan. Noel Villalba and NCC/J's Rev. Suguru Matsuki made up the

northern group, speaking in Hirosaki Sendai, Aizu Wakamatsu and Kofu. Rev. Park Sang Jung and NCC/J's Gen. Secretary Maejima Munetoshi went south visiting Okayama, Hiroshima and Kobe.

ASIA SUNDAY MESSAGE

Noel Villalba's Asia Sunday Message

Arrest and Torture in Philippines

Last year in June, I went to the Philippines to visit organizing projects. I was then the coordinator of the Asian Committee for People's Organization, an ecumenical program in Asia for people's organizing.

On June 27, I was arrested by the Philippine military. No warrant of arrest was shown nor any reason given for why I was being arrested.

I was brought to a military camp where I was interrogated for twelve hours. The military accused me of collecting money and buying weapons for the communists in the Philippines. I denied these accusations.

Still the military believed I was guilty, so in order to get information they tortured me. I was brought to a toilet, stripped of my clothes. I was made to lie down on a bench, tied with ropes. I was blindfolded. A rag was placed over my nose and mouth.

They took out my phone book and started to read the names. "Who is this?" "Is he a communist?"

I answered No. They poured water down my throat until I could not breathe. I had to say "Yes" in order to breathe. Then they went to the next name. And so on for seven hours. When my stomach was full of water, they jumped on it, breaking one of my ribs in the process, forcing water out of my nose and mouth.

After the torture, I was brought to a dirty cell.

What The Experience Means

1) The powerful in society do not like the symbolism of the Christian getting involved in empowerment of people at the grassroots. It was true in first century Palestine. It is true in twentieth century Philippines.

2) Jesus liberated people's minds. And made the lowly the children of God. For this he was arrested, tortured and crucified.

3) I believe that to be a follower of Christ means to be an organizer of the poor so that they become full human beings: able to work, able to participate in society, able to enjoy freedom.

FREE EAST TIMOR

Political Refugee Visits Okinawa Heiwa Christian Center

According to East Timorese Jose Gusmao, a four year exile to Australia, December 7, 1988 marked the 13th anniversary of the bloody invasion by Indonesian troops of his homeland, East Timor. "Today my people are starving." "I come here as an old friend to ask for your help, and to reinforce the link between Japan and East Timor."..."Your tax dollars are being used to kill my people!" Jose announced at a "Free the East Timorese Rally" held in Okinawa City, Okinawa on December 7, 1988.

"For 500 years East Timor was a colony of Portugal. On April 25, 1974 the Portuguese government gave all its colonies the right to self-determination and independence, and 10 days later on December 7th at 12:00 A.M., Indonesian troops brutally invaded our territory. Sixty East Timorese civilians were machine-gunned to death."

Jose further disclosed, "At 1:00 p.m. on the day of the invasion, my family and I ran to the mountains in East Timor where we received protection from the Fretlin resistance, and for 4 years I

joined the Fretlin army. In 1978-79 when I was in the jungle with my friends (fighting with the Fretlin resistance against the Indonesian troops), Indonesia carried out 1 of its biggest military operations against us in which we lost 98% of our Fretlin commanders, and 85% of our Fretlin army. Those who survived the battle were forced to live in Indonesian concentration camps."

"200,000 East Timorese out of a total population of 700,000 have died since the war began; 20% of all East Timorese families have lost at least 2 family members. Because most of the people who have died in the war are men, single-parent mothers have to farm their land and care for their children by themselves."

In 1978, Jose was taken by Indonesian troops to a small village and put under "house arrest" for 1 month at which time he was forced daily to clean the blood-stained walls (from the torture of East Timorese) of the Indonesian Intelligence Headquarters.

According to the "Tapol Bulletin" (#87, June 1988), since the first invasion of Indonesian troops in 1975, Indonesian armed forces have repeatedly launched small, medium, and large scale attacks against the Fretlin guerrillas and innocent East Timorese in the countryside; entire villages have been decimated, and virtually every military unit in Indonesia has had combat experience in East Timor.

Jose explained the role of American and Japanese intervention in the war as follows: "Your Japanese government has given much money to Indonesia to build roads in East Timor which Indonesian soldiers use to arrest and kill our people." He added that Indonesian's who run hospitals funded by Japanese tax dollars are killing East Timorese children with poisoned "medicine", and are giving women Depo Provera injections without their knowledge. The controversial Depo Provera is now the most widely used contraceptive in East Timor (Tapol Bulletin #87, 6/88). Depo Provera is not used in America or other European countries due to its potential

harmful effects. Jose reported that both the U.S. and Japan are providing the Indonesian military with scientific technology to aid them in their war against the East Timorese. Some 85% of Indonesian weapons are supplied by the U.S., among them are American skyhawk attack planes once used by the U.S. in the Vietnam War.

"One only need to go to Baucau (located in Dili, the capital of East Timor) to see the military base from which U.S. manufactured planes take off daily to bomb Fretlin positions and zones occupied by the resistance." (Tapol Bulletin #87, 6/88)

"Not only are Indonesian troops killing the people of East Timor, but Indonesia is also imposing social and cultural genocide on the East Timorese", asserted Jose. "Indonesian language is being taught in our schools and mosques and Muslim missionaries are being imposed on us by the Indonesians." It has been reported that 60% of East Timorese are Catholic.

Jose disclosed how the Indonesian government has closed East Timor to practically all foreigners. Only a few journalists and politicians are permitted entry into the country, and upon entry they are often escorted by the Indonesian military, and sometimes forbidden to speak with East Timorese people ("Tapol", #89, 1988).

Lum Soli Liong from the Dutch Indonesian Committee described East Timor as "one of the most isolated and tightly controlled areas in the world today".

As of January 1988 there have been 16,000 East Timorese who have taken refuge in Australia, alone; and there are 15,000 Indonesian troops fighting against the 1,500 Fretlin-led resistance fighters ("East Timor: Churches Urged to Speak Out", January 1988).

Although Indonesia claims East Timor as its 27th province, this status is currently being disputed under "UN terms" because the East Timorese "have not exercised their right to self-determination." Therefore, the illegal

annexation of East Timor is not recognized by the UN, and Indonesia has lost its status as a non-aligned country.

Jose has lost 21 of his family member since the bloody battle of East Timor began, including 3 of his sons. On May 5, 1985 Jose, his wife and son, narrowly escaped from East Timor to Australia after a message had been sent to the Bali Airport for the Red Beret Indonesian troops to intercept him.

Currently, the Gusamao family is residing in Australia where they continue their struggle in the fight for liberation of the East Timorese people by concientizing various "peace groups" in Australia and Asian countries about the wars and human rights violations being waged on East Timor by Indonesians.

Article contributed by Lisa Hendricksor - Intern, Okinawa Christian Center

THE KOSEKI SYSTEM

The NCC/J Education Department held an open meeting on Japan's family registration system (Koseki) at the Christian Center in Tokyo on March 17, 1989. The following is a summary of the meeting.

Ms. Mizuho Fukushima (Lawyer) provided information on the systems of discrimination created by the Koseki system under the title, "Koseki and Marriage" from the perspective of women and children.

Mr. Heiichi Sumihi (Kyodan Buraku Liberation Center) spoke on "Buraku Discrimination and Koseki" and Ms. Oh Sue, (Education Department of the Korean Christian Church in Japan) talked from the perspective of Koreans in Japan.

Koseki and Marriage:

Ms. Fukushima pointed out that the Civil Laws issued in 1898, understood marriage as existing for the sake of the

continuation of the household and not of the couple themselves. Thus, the laws were most unfavorable in relation to women who were treated as objects or the personal belongings of men.

Women were thought to be incapable of handling financial matters. Chastity was required only of women but not men.

After World War II the Civil laws were revised and the household system was abolished. However, the psychological effects of the household system have remained in society. The Koseki system was changed to include the family relations of husband, wife and their unmarried children instead of recognizing three generations as a family unit.

The function of the Koseki system is to administer families as the basic unit in society by designating all family relationships. Through this system it is possible to trace all relatives and bind people of the same family tree.

The actual application of the Koseki system limits the Japanese family only to Japanese nationals and foreigners are not able to retain a Koseki. Through this Japanese are separated from the foreigners.

1987 statistics indicated that 97.8% of Japanese married women changed their names to that of their husbands' family. The Koseki system enforces discrimination against women and strengthens patriarchal control.

Although the present constitution recognizes marriage to be an agreement between a man and a woman, children of couples who do not register their marriages at the city office, are designated illegitimate. There are couples who are fighting in the courts in order to eliminate the discrimination remaining in these laws.

Buraku Discrimination and Koseki:

Koseki (family register) transcripts were sold to people interested in investigating personal backgrounds before exchanging marriage vows. Not

only was the Koseki system used as a tool in practicing discrimination against the Buraku peoples but also these laws instituted a system of discrimination among classes in Japanese society for, generally systems of class stratification have been retained to strengthen social concepts which separate nobility from outcast groups.

The social structures of the Emperor system are built on discriminating against lower social strata, and the Koseki system was instituted in parallel to control positions in society.

The authority of succession and descent in the imperial household emphasizes the importance of blood lineage. In the same manner the blood lineage of commoners is recorded and maintained through the Koseki system.

The work of the Kyodan Buraku Liberation Center is a struggle which seeks to have people recognized as the subjects of their own history rather than as being locked into the stratified social classes implied in the Koseki system.

The Koreans in Japan

The Koseki of Koreans in Japan are not incorporated in the Japanese system but in the Korean Koseki system. During Japan's colonial rule of Korea, Koreans in Japan retained Japanese nationality but after the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1945 Koreans in Japan were named North and South Koreans.

These changes in nationality were forced upon the people by the rulers without the consent of the people. When Japanese acquired suffrage after World War II, Koreans lost the right to live in Japan. When basic Japanese education laws were passed, Koreans in Japan lost the right to receive education in the Korean culture and language.

Korean society is patriarchal in nature and women do not change their names in marriage. This is an attempt to sustain the family system. Korean laws prohibit adoptions. If a woman's husband were to father a child with another woman, the wife must accept the child of another

without question and the child must retain the husband's name.

Presently over 70% of Koreans in Japan have married Japanese. Women who marry Korean nationals must become Koreans and give up Japanese nationality within six months. After becoming a Korean national they must register with the Japanese city office every year.

The emperor system in Japan incorporates all these elements of discriminated against women, against Koreans and against the Buraku people.

THE QUESTION OF PEACE

Differing Perspectives

The NCC/J - NCCCUSA Peace Consultation came to a close on Sunday April 2nd with an open forum at the Tokyo Union Church. The program featured talks by Alan Geyer, professor of political ethics at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C. and Kamo Takehito, professor of international politics at Tokyo University.

Feliciano Carino, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, and Rev. Kim Dong Wan, former head of the human rights desk of the National Council of Churches in Korea, were given opportunities to "respond" to these presentations.

From the main presentations a perspective of peace was drawn in relation to issues such as nuclear disarmament, an analysis of the issue of "security", and a discussion of military hardware in the context of the military strategies of both the United States and Japan.

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the open forum were the replies by the Philippine and Korean participants. They created an awareness that the question of peace is not only about strategic nuclear submarines or a discussion of the issue of "security", issues often taken up by those involved in peace work

in both the U.S. and Japan, but rather about structures that create fundamental economic injustice, people's struggle for survival and the reunification of a nation divided as a result of cold war ideology and superpower agenda's.

It is the agenda of the superpowers, in both war and peacemaking activities that prompted Feliciano Carino to offer the following illustration: "When elephants fight, or even when they make love, grass is trampled." And in this light adding "when we think that America is becoming weaker, we hear that Japan is coming to share the burden" referring to Japan's ever increasing "development assistance" and influence in the Philippines. It is this kind of superpower intervention and "burden-sharing" that has created the necessity to build a theology of struggle in the Philippines - not yet a theology of peace.

Reflecting on the peace consultation (JCAN April 1989) Rev. Kim Dong Wan emphasized the importance of regarding "other people's problems as our own" and "other people's suffering as our own". It is upon this perspective that peacemaking must be built.

By: Liann Ainsworth

IF WE DON'T STOP NUCLEAR POWER
IT WILL KILL US ALL

by Toshi Maruki

I found out that our electric bill is automatically paid out of our bank account. I decided to pay my electric bill directly to the Electric Company and asked the electric company representatives to come to the Maruki Peace Museum where the Hiroshima Panels are displayed.

Two company men came, looking very serious and somewhat embarrassed. I told them to sit down and gave them cups of tea. I said to them, "In the case of a nuclear power plant accident we, and everyone in the electric company will

ace disaster. The Tokyo Electric company which sells electricity and we, the purchasers, will face the same disaster. If such an accident occurs, please kindly take care of us." And I owed deeply to them. The two men smiled hesitantly.

When I asked, "How much is the cost of the electricity the museum uses from hydroelectric sources and the cost from thermal sources?" They looked very surprised and puzzled by what I asked.

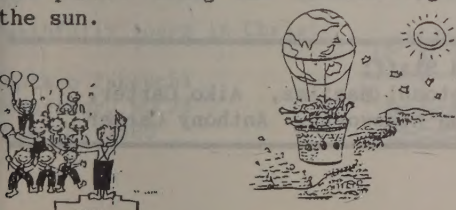
I continued, "I am saying that I am going to pay you the cost of my electric bill." Then, they understood what I said and looked happier. I said, "I will pay for three months. So, I am asking you, what is the cost of the hydroelectric bill and what is the cost for thermal power generation?"

One man said, "Please pay it all together." I said, "I pay only for the costs of hydroelectric and thermal power." They said that would be difficult. I continued, saying that they shouldn't perceive any difficulty for I am paying the bill. They said, "You must pay it all." I said, "You should know that I oppose nuclear power plants. Don't give me a hard time." They stated again their frustration, so I continued the same argument.

I sat down on the porch and they sat on tree stumps which were part of the set of a little outdoor theater operated by the museum. Evening came. They said they would come back again tomorrow.

The next day I said I would pay the bill and they said that it would be difficult. We continued the same argument for three days.

This same argument was continued several times and on May 12th the Electric Company turned off the museum's electricity. The museum then opened to the public using the natural light of the sun.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE
TO SUPPORT
SEPARATION OF STATE AND RELIGION

The National Conference to observe Violations of the constitutional principle on the Separation of State and Religion was held on May 14, 1989 to commemorate its 15 years work in the Konkokyo Religious Center, in Tokyo. About 50 people participated in the meeting and listened to a talk by Mr. Shin Young Soo, chairperson of Atomic Bomb Victims Association in South Korea.

The gathering commenced with an opening address by Prof. Yoshinori Aizawa, Sophia University. He said, that the struggle for realization of the principles of separation of State and Religion has been defeated repeatedly. However, this struggle must endure and continue its efforts.

Mr. Shin told the audience about his life and the fact that Koreans were drafted into the Japanese Imperial Army and that Korean women were used as comfort girls for Japanese soldiers under the banner "Koreans too are children of the Emperor of Japan". When World War II ended we were the forgotten ones.

We were brought to Japan as manual labor for the Emperor, and experienced the Atomic Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But, the Japanese social welfare program for atom bomb victims did not apply for foreigners.

He continued to criticize the Japanese government's attempts to increase nationalism through the government moves to nationalize the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine which enshrines the war dead as gods, and through the attempts to control public school text books by the Ministry of Education. He pointed out the dangers of Japan's right wing thrusts and called on Japan to create a responsible policy for the atomic bomb victims in Korea. He concluded his speech by appealing for support from all people in helping the victims.

Mr. Lu Pay Chun, journalist from Singapore, spoke about his observations on the occasion of the Showa Tenno's death saying that Japan's freedom and democracy were facing great dangers. He said that speaking about the emperor's war responsibility is not a criticism of the individual. We are not asking that those who died in the war be brought back again. We are asking that there not be a resurgence of militarism again.

Our criticisms of Japan is a response to that drafting of the ideology which will bring back militarism. He asked each Japanese to think about the issues of Japan's war responsibility.

The group has decided seriously to watch the new Tenno who has acceded to the irresponsible attitude toward Show Tenno's war responsibility.

Mr. Keniji Anzai, (Otani Buddhism priest), plaintiff representative who fought against Ehime City Hall for providing public funds to Shinto shrine offerings, reported on the court struggle. The Ehime district court favored the plaintiffs on March 17, 1989 and this was the first time such a struggle was won in court. However, after the court decision rightist groups continued to attack the plaintiff and unsigned protest letters were sent to him.

Mr. Anzai regrets that the Japanese people are so narrow minded and think only of themselves. He explained that his initiative in entering into such a court struggle was based on the fact that his religious practice was questioned and that he needed to respond to people who had given up their Buddhist practices.

Resolutions from the meeting called for actions in opposition to the coming Daijosai which is planned by the State for the enthronement of new emperor, and for making lists of all of Japan's war responsibilities vis-a-vis other Asians.

(Translation from Kirisuto Shinbun, May 27)

PROSTITUTION CULTURE AND THE MASS MEDIA

Recent mass media reportage indicate that a group of male high school students murdered a fellow female student and buried the body in concrete. In most of the articles about the case, lack of motherly love is cited as the cause. Instead of recognizing the human rights of women, women are treated as sex objects and there is no media talk about the present "prostitution culture which dominates society.

The perpetrators of the crime could not see that the victim also was, like them, a human being. The mass media is filled with pornographic pictures and stories and women are treated as objects to be raped. These boys grew up in a culture of prostitution.

Advertisements use women's sexuality. Commercialism excites desire through close-ups of the female form. Comic books are filled with sexual violence against women. There is no exception in this regard in magazines for teenagers. Pornographic magazines are sold everywhere and video rentals are also fully available.

Sex industries are developing rapidly in the prostitution culture which is a product of a patriarchal society which discriminates against women.

In April of 1989, in Osaka, a meeting called "Let's Stop Rape" was held. Discrimination against women should be reconsidered as part of the corporate social responsibility.

by Kuniko Funabashi

(Summary/translation from Asahi Shinbun, May 19, 1989)

JCAN Staff:

Munetoshi Maejima, Aiko Carter,
Liann Ainsworth, Anthony Carter
